2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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the latter tribe that they appeared to him "to have the advantage of the others in being more adroit, more docile, and more courageous; but they are more attached to their old superstitions and are terrible *demanders*, as the Canadian employees here call shameless beggars; happily they are not offended when refused." In addition, he stated that if the Gros Ventres were less importunate he would willingly entitle them the Flatheads of the Missouri "as they have something of their simplicity and bravery." He considered that "the Piegans are the most civilized but the most noted thieves; the Blood well made and generally less dirty; while the Blackfeet proper are, it is said, the most hospitable." Among all four tribes Father Point found the disproportion of sexes great, and attributed to warfare the preponderance of women over men.[64]

The heart of the area held by the Gros Ventres at that time, and claimed by them subsequently at least until the establishment of the Fort Belknap Reservation in 1873, and probably until 1888, was described by Hayden as follows: "At present [1862] and for many years past, they range along the Milk River, on the east side of the Missouri, extending as far as the Cypress Mountains. From this line to the Marias River stretches a beautiful level country well covered with grass and adapted to pasturage of buffalo. Here the Indians under consideration may be found at all seasons—in the winter along the banks of the Milk River where wood may be obtained and in summer on the plains where fuel is not so necessary."[65] As the Gros Ventres were by no means confined to this area they were in intermittent conflict with surrounding tribes.

With a view to settling the quarrels of the Blackfoot, Piegan and Gros Ventres east of the mountains, and of the Flathead, Kootenais and Nez Percé and others west of the mountains, Governor Stevens held a council with the Gros Ventres on the Milk River in August, 1853, and with the Blackfoot and Piegan at Fort Benton in September.[66] In 1854, he ordered a thousand dollars worth of goods from Culbertson of the American Fur Company, for distribution to the Piegan and Gros Ventres. These goods, consisting mainly of foodstuffs with which they were un-

[64] Father Point's letter of 1847, in De Smet, pp. 254, 256.
[65] Hayden, p. 340.
[66] Hoopes, p. 101.

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462 she herself had picked or dug. In preparing the material for
476 storage, too, the women would sit in a big circle, pounding cherries
[251] for instance, one woman helping to crush the cherries brought in by another. But, again, while it lightened the work of an individual woman who might have gathered more than the others, there was no pooling of resources. Sociability and friendship were apparently the chief motives for joining such a work group.

463 While there was a slight amount of occupational specialization, there was no real division of labor in the sense that persons with, say, supernatural power to cure, and who were well paid for their services, would be supported by this means alone. Nor could a man live, for instance, by specializing in raiding and raising horses. Every man, whatever else he might do, would have to make at least an attempt to hunt. Similarly, regardless of the temporary division of tasks which might be assigned among the women of the household, no individual woman could profit sufficiently through her ability to cut and fit lodge covers or through her ability to embroider well. Some, who were more skilled at one task than another, might perhaps devote more time and energy to that pursuit, but the rewards therefor were more in the nature of prestige than of direct economic advantage. An old woman for instance might be adept at making buffalo-hair rope. Men desiring to have it, would give her things in exchange for it, but it is doubtful if she would receive sufficient from this one type of manufacture to make her independent of relatives, even so far as food was concerned.

464 The potential supply of labor consisted in all able-bodied men of the tribe from the age of about 17 or 18, at which time a young
[582] man was sufficiently skilled to hunt seriously, and of all able-bodied females from about the age of twelve, the time at which the
● [162] average girl was married and was supposed to have been trained to woman's work. The unbalance of the sexes in favor of females, a marked feature in the population of the northern plains tribes,[4]
461 plus the fact that the tasks allotted to women could be begun at a much earlier age than those undertaken by men, meant that the amount of labor contributed by the woman, in manufacturing economic goods, was greater than the amount of labor available

[4] Cf. Wissler, 1936 (a), p. 38.